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38. The door module of claim 18, wherein said door module has a waterproofing perimeter and is to be assembled to the door inner liner by bolts or screws at the waterproofing perimeter, and further comprising at least one metallic rivet placed between the door inner liner and said module for attachment of the bolts or screws.

Request for return of PTO 1449

An Information Disclosure Statement, accompanied by a PTO 1449, was filed at the time of entry at the National Phase on June 20, 2000. It asked that an initialed copy of that PTO 1449 be provided.

REMARKS

The Examiner's action dated May 21, 2001, has been received, and its contents carefully noted. In response to the rejections presented in that action, claims 1-17 have been cancelled and replaced by new claim 18-38. The new claims have been drafted to be free of the sources of indefiniteness on which the rejection of the original claims under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, was based, and to clearly distinguish over the prior art relied upon to reject the claims under 35 USC 103, as well as all other prior art of record.

Therefore, the rejections presented in the previous action are traversed and it is submitted that the new claims fully comply with 35 USC 112 and distinguish patentably over the prior art of record.

The present invention is directed to a novel door module that is to be assembled to a door inner liner of an automotive vehicle door. The door module according to the invention is composed essentially of a door trim panel that

will constitute the interior surface of the vehicle door, and at least one of a window regulator sub-assembly and a door lock sub-assembly carried by the door trim panel prior to assembly of the door trim panel to the door inner liner. According to a novel feature of the invention, at least one of the sub-assemblies is mounted to be movable relative to the door trim panel before the door trim panel is assembled to the door inner liner.

The use of a door module in which at least one sub-assembly is carried by the door trim panel prior to assembly to the door inner liner serves to simplify assembly of a vehicle door. Furthermore, according to a particular novel feature of the invention, at least one such sub-assembly is mounted to be movable relative to the door trim panel before that module is assembled to the door inner liner. This feature is particularly beneficial in that it greatly facilitates proper positioning and attachment of the sub-assembly to the door inner liner.

Because the sub-assembly is carried by the door trim panel, the sub-assembly will automatically be brought to approximately the desired final position when the door panel is mounted on the door inner liner. However, because the sub-assembly is movable relative to the door trim panel, the sub-assembly can then be brought to its exact desired final position relative to the door inner liner, taking into account tolerance variations from one trim panel to another and/or from one door inner liner to another. Indeed, it is this feature that makes possible the preliminary mounting of one or more sub-assemblies on the door trim panel and rapid assembly of the module that include the door trim panel to the door inner liner.

These novel features of the invention are clearly defined in new independent claim 18, particular reference being made to the final clause thereof.

Contrary to the assertions presented in the last office action in support of the prior art rejection, neither of the applied reference contains any disclosure of a door trim panel that carries either a window regulator sub-assembly or a door lock sub-assembly prior to assembly of a door module to a door inner liner. Indeed, with respect to the primary reference, Benoit, the only component that appears to be attached to the door trim panel prior to assembly is a courtesy lamp lens 150, shown in figure 14.

The secondary reference, Ohya, has been cited only for its disclosure of the provision of drain holes. It is noted, however, that this reference also fails to disclose a module that includes a door trim panel and at least one sub-assembly carried by the door trim panel prior to assembly of the door trim panel to a door inner liner.

Furthermore, none of the art of record discloses a door module that includes a sub-assembly mounted to be movable relative to a door trim panel before the module is assembled to a door inner liner.


Accordingly, it is submitted that new claim 18 clearly distinguishes patentably over all of the prior art of record and it is therefore requested that claim 18, as well as all of the claims dependent therefrom, now be allowed

If the present amendment should not now place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call undersigned counsel to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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